

# COBBETT'S WEEKLY POLITICAL REGISTER.

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TO THE PEOPLE OF ENGLAND, SCOTLAND,  
AND IRELAND.

*Mr. Cobbett's arrival at New-York and Long-Island.—Answers to the slanders published against him after his departure from England.—Stamp-Office humbug—Gen. Kempt's humbug.—Journey from London to Liverpool. Disagreeable and perilous voyage by sea.—Remarks on Emigration.—Plentiful and happy lives of the people of America.—Why not the same in England?—We do not want to change the laws or the form of government in England?—We only want our rights.—Legal right to resist oppression.—Answer to the base Morning Chronicle.*

Long-Island, State of New-York,  
8th May, 1817.

MY BELOVED COUNTRYMEN,

I promised you, in my *Leave Taking Address*, dated in London, the 21st of March last, that I was about to exile myself only for the purpose of being able to continue my exertions in our glorious cause. Accordingly, I have hardly recovered from the rocking of the waves; when I sit down for the purpose of convincing you that I am not unmindful of that promise. That I might fulfil which promise I have retired, for the present, to an Inn in this Island, at a distance of thirteen miles from the city of New-York, after having remained in that city during only twenty-four hours, having landed there in the evening of Monday the fifth of this present month of May.

Before I proceed to any other topics, it is necessary that I should rebut the base calumnies which corruption has caused to be published in London against me, since

my departure, and which her agents (of whom there are many here, as I well knew before, and whom I will describe to you another time) have already caused to be re-published in New-York. The TIMES and COURIER news-papers are regularly sent here to these agents, who, though their will is good, do not find it prudent to send forth the principles and the assertions of corruption's press as their own principles and assertions; but in order to serve corruption as much as possible, they faithfully copy, or cause to be copied, from corruption's press every thing that tends to serve her cause in England.

A ship from Greenock, having had a very short passage, arrived the next day after my arrival, and, it seems, brought TIMES and COURIERS to the sixth or seventh of April, which was eleven days later than the day of my sailing. From these, one or two of corruption's friends here copied articles containing, in substance, the following assertions. FIRST, that my son (who was proprietor of the Register and other publications) owed eighty thousand pounds sterling to the government for stamps. SECOND, that I had craftily removed to my own house at Botley, out of Sir James KEMPT's house, in order to defraud Sir James out of the rent due to him for his house and farm. I dare say that a thousand other falsehoods are afloat; but when I have shown you only these two in their true light, I trust it will be unnecessary for me to occupy my future pages with refutations of these base personal calumnies.

Corruption's agents, while they were aiming a blow at me before I was hardly on shore, did, however, though unwittingly (for they are less keen than her hire-

lings in England) render me a most *important service* by removing all doubt as to the fact of my "LEAVE TAKING ADDRESS," having been *published* in England, a fact with regard to which I was in the greatest possible anxiety.

In that Address I fully and truly stated my reasons for leaving England, and well calculated that statement was to make a deep impression on the minds of the whole of the people, whatever their political principles, or notions, might be; for, it was notorious to every one, that my income must be immense; and, as it was utterly impossible for corruption to fabricate any *crime* to lay to my charge, the conclusion in the mind of every man, of every party, must have been, that I, who understood the laws so well and also the intentions of those in power, felt that there was *no safety left for innocence*. It behoved corruption, therefore, to hatch some *other reason* for my leaving the country; for the bare step, even without any reason publicly given for it, carried in itself such irresistible force, that it was enough to make her tremble in every limb and joint of her body. Upon the receipt of the news of my departure from Liverpool she seems instantly to have cast about her for some cause other than what she knew to be the real one. And, the *COURIER*, in great haste, and (as will presently appear) very unadvisedly, told the public, that it was *not any fear that I could have of a dungeon*, which had made me set off, but the fear of the consequences of a debt of 80,000 pounds, which my *eldset son* owed to the government for *stamps*! There was something so utterly incredible in this; it was a thing so entirely impossible, that nothing but that sort of fatuity which flurried fear is so apt to produce, could have caused it to be committed to paper and sent forth to the world. The stamps for the Register amounted to

about 1,500 pounds a year. So that here are *upwards of fifty years'* stamps due for, and my son had not been proprietor for more than 15 months. Besides, never in our lives did we have one single stamp without *paying for it before it was taken from the Stamp Office*. It is well known that the Stamp-Office gives credit to no-body; and, in short, the story was so wholly ridiculous, that it could not be believed for half a day. Yet, there was a *something*, which, in our absence, might have given a little countenance to it for a short time. I dare say, that those wise gentlemen at the Stamp-Office *really have such a bill against my son*! And now, while you hear the curious history of this charge, restrain your indignation if you can.

The charge, which they pretend to have against my son, is for the *unstamped Registers*! Though, as every man in England knows, they were not in any way whatever, chargeable with any stamp duty at all. However, the history is very curious, and is well worthy of being communicated to the world. The first *cheap Register* was No. 18 of Volume 31, and was published on the 2nd of November, 1816. Is it not strange, that, from that time to the end of March, no charge should have been made by the Stamp-Office? Is it not strange that they should have suffered my son to go on with 12 Nos. of "Paper against Gold;" making altogether 39 Numbers, and of copies about two millions, without making any charge; and that, too, considering how anxious the government was to stop the circulation? Is it not notorious to you all, that the magistrates were taking up the travelling retailers *under the hawkers' and peddlars' act* for *selling without a license*, though they permitted *all other* pamphlets to be hawked without a license, not excepting the pamphlets against me? Is it



not notorious to you all, that there were scores of pamphlets hawked about against me, sold at the same price, printed in the same form, in the same size, and some of them pretended even to have been written by myself, and that, instead of being punished for hawking them, the hawkers were encouraged? All this is perfectly notorious; and, can you believe, that means so flagrantly unjust and odious would have been resorted to, if the simple and easy means had existed of demanding a stamp-duty, which by raising the price from two-pence to about eight-pence would have checked the circulation at once most effectually? The fact is, that the law was as clear as day-light in our favour. The law requires a stamp to all papers containing news. You all know that my papers contained no news; that they were mere essays on politics. Upon this ground all the other pamphlets proceeded, and, you will never hear of their being charged with a debt for stamps. But, there is also, by the same law, a pamphlet duty. It is this: that for every pamphlet, 3 shillings for each sheet contained in one of its copies shall be paid; so that, a pamphlet of one sheet pays 3 shillings, a pamphlet of 2 sheets, 6 shillings and so on to 10 sheets, after which the work is considered as a book. If you print 100 copies of a pamphlet, you pay the 3 shillings, and, if you print 100 thousand copies, you still pay only 3 shillings. This is not intended as a duty, but as a compulsion upon you to carry one copy of every pamphlet to the Stamp Office, and there enter it with your name, residence, &c. in order that the government may have an eye upon all the pamphlets that are published! With this part of the law my son very scrupulously complied; and now you shall have a tale that will puzzle you to know whether it ought to make you to laugh or to curse.

When the first of the unstamped numbers was carried to the Stamp Office, and a copy presented, with the three shillings, both were received agreeably to the law; but, by the time that the second was presented, a discovery had been made, that the work was producing effects, such as had not been expected; and, we were told, that the Board, that is to say, the Commissioners, could not receive the work as a pamphlet at present; but, that they had it under their consideration. To this end a friend and myself went with one of the Numbers to the Stamp-Office, and sent in a notification in writing to the Commissioners, that we came on the part of William Cobbett, junior, to enter a pamphlet of such a title, and to pay the duty for it; and that we requested to be permitted so to do, or be admitted to the Board to hear the reasons of our not being permitted to enter the pamphlet.

This appeared to pose the wise men. We got no answer for some time. The clerks went backwards and forwards in great apparent agitation. At last, we were admitted to "their Honours," one of whom, in a tremulous voice, addressing himself to me, said, that they had laid all the pamphlet before the Attorney and Solicitor General. "THANK you, Sir," said I; "but, it is not on the question of libel or no libel, that my son wishes to have a decision. It is of your reason, if you please, for not receiving the pamphlet, agreeably to the law, and to the duty which that law positively imposes upon you, that he wishes to be informed." They then said, that they had their doubts, whether they ought to receive the publication as a pamphlet, or not. It was in vain that I pressed them to state the grounds of their doubts; it was in vain that I asked how the doubts came to have arisen after their receiving of the first Number; it was in vain that I

expressed my surprise at the length of time which it had taken to clear up any doubts that could have arisen in so simple a case, and that, too, aided, as their Honours were, by the acute powers of the Attorney and Solicitor General. I could goad them into no explanation; but, at last, I pushed them so hard, that they came to this promise, that *no advantage* should be taken of my son *with regard to what had been already passed*. And thus the affair remained at the time of our leaving London. But, from the story which has now reached us through that infamous vehicle of corruption's calumnies, the *COURIER*, it would seem, that the charge has actually been trumped up of a heavy debt due to the government from my son; nor should I be very greatly surprised, if an Exchequer Process, upon this ground, were instituted against him, and in default of appearance, and on proof of his being beyond the reach of the court, if all the measures of *outlawry* were to follow; though it is hardly credible, that a piece of injustice, at once so flagrant, so base, and so perfectly *useless*, will be resorted to by any body, who have any portion of shame or of reason left in their minds; and, I would fain hope, merely for the honour of human intellect, that two men, so highly, and indeed, so justly, distinguished for legal talent as Mr. GARROW and Mr. SHEPPHERD, will not be induced so far to degrade themselves and their learned profession.

It is so well known, not only to every lawyer in England, but to every bookseller, every publisher, every printer, and, in short, to the whole nation, that my Political Pamphlet was not at all liable to a stamp duty, the alleging of *this cause* of our exile must, as I said before, have been suggested by *fear in a hurry*. The object was to quiet, for the moment, the minds of the people. It was instantly felt what

a sensation the flight of a man, whose writings were so popular, and who notoriously left such a fortune behind him, must make throughout every part of the kingdom. It was instantly perceived, that the public mind, rushing back at once from so signal an effect to the *cause*, would be filled with indignation and rage. And, therefore, though the fraud must soon be discovered, it was desirable, even for the moment, to put forth something to mitigate the sensation. This, I take, to have been the real object in the hatching, and bringing forth, this charge of a debt, due to the government. Not that I am certain, that if we had remained, this charge would *not* have been really acted upon. To silence me by *some means or other*, had become absolutely necessary to the existence (for only a few months) of the Borough-system. To pitch me into a dungeon, and to deprive me of the use of pen, ink, and paper, would have been something more odious and cruel than would have been liked to be resorted to. I had *sons*, well known not to be void of talent or of resolution. I had friends innumerable, attached to me too firmly to be easily pacified. Besides, there were Members in both Houses of Parliament, who would not have been silent under the perpetration of so crying an act of injustice. This, therefore, was a mode of reducing me to silence, which was to be avoided *if possible*, and therefore, shameful as it would have been, the *Stamp Scheme* might have been resorted to, after I had refused, or rather had given *no answer*, to a proposition to *see Lord Sidmouth, and to retire to my estate with a compensation for the loss of the income from my writings*, which was, as I can *prove*, actually the case. I do not *assert*, that his Lordship authorized such communication; but, I assert, that I had such proposition made to me by a person whom I believe, and have *good reason* to



believe, was authorized by his Lordship to make it. I gave *no answer*; and while the answer was expected, I departed. I did not think it *safe* to give an answer. To remain at large in England, and be *silent*, is what I could not have endured. I should have died in a month. And the probable consequences of *the vengeance*, which would to a *certainty* have followed my being shut up in a dungeon and away from my family, were such as I could not have lived in expectation of, without being driven to madness.

The Stamp-Office Scheme was, however, very flagrant. The notoriety of the fact, that all *other pamphlets* of the same size, same form, treating of the very subjects, published, like mine, weekly; the notoriety of the fact, that all these were freely published without a stamp, or any attempt even being made to cause them to pay a stamp duty; this fact being so well known, would have rendered the proceeding extremely odious. Those who wished to stop me were well aware of this; yet they could (as Lord Sidmouth avowed) find nothing to *prosecute as libellous*; nothing that they dared to bring by Information Ex-officio before even one of their special Juries. They, therefore, set to work to fine and imprison the itinerant retailers, under pretence of their violating the *Hawkers' and Pedlars' Act*; while all other *pamphlets* were suffered to be hawked freely, and even *encouraged* so to be hawked by those same persons: and, indeed, while the sons and daughters of corruption were actually *subscribing large sums to cause the pamphlets in opposition to me to be hawked*. Nay, there were Magistrates, who were putting men into prison for violating the *Hawkers' and Pedlars' Act* in circulating my pamphlets, who were, at the same time, actually subscribing to defray the expenses of circulating and hawking pamphlets written to

vilify all the Reformers, and especially me by name.

When you consider all these things, which are notoriously true; when you consider, that LORD SIDMOUTH, in the House of Lords, when he brought forward the Bill for *taking away the safety to our persons*, said, that he had laid all "*these cheap publications* before the Law Officers of the Crown, and, that he was "*sorry to say*, that they had been *unable to discern any thing in them, which it was likely that they could prosecute with success*;" when you consider, that he confessed, that he was *ashamed* to be under the necessity of resorting to such a measure as the proposed Law; when you consider all this, you will see, at once, how utterly improbable it is, that the charge for stamp-duty could have the least foundation, seeing, that if that charge could have been maintained even in appearance, how completely the government could have put a stop to the circulation of even the *very first Number*, and, thereby, have got rid of the so much dreaded publication, without any of these shameful deeds, which have, at last, left not the slightest veil over the Boroughmonger System, which now stands exposed in all its nakedness, and is *known*, by every human being, to be, really and truly, a — what I need not name.

But, though it is clear, that there was not even any *colour* for this charge, I do not say, that this scheme would not have been attempted in preference to the shutting me up in a dungeon, deprived of the use of pen, ink, and paper, which the shutters up must have been pretty sure, would have been followed by swift vengeance of some sort or other, and, to *prevent* which vengeance, by the hands of those who would have inflicted it, was a weighty motive with me in leaving England. A *law suit* with the government,

right or wrong, would have been a perilous thing. Expensive at least, and, if in the end, a verdict had been given against my son, his lot must have been imprisonment for the length of the duration of the Borough-System, unless he had been *ransomed by my silence*, seeing the "*Crown-Debtors*" as they are called, are *not entitled to the benefit of the insolvent act!* Yet, they were afraid of this *law suit*. It must have been public. There must have been *discussion* about it. There must have been a *jury*. There must have been the *character of a Judge* exposed. The plotters of the scheme were quite aware of our capacity to defend ourselves. In short, it was a thing *to be avoided*. But, in the moment they heard that we *were off*, it occurred to them to put forward this charge; and, for this reason, that it was better to make the world believe that we had fled from a *Debt*, than it was to leave it to believe, that we, who understood law and politics, and the real intentions of the Boroughmongers so well, *were sincerely convinced, there was no safety left even for men the most innocent*. Our flight must necessarily give a sudden shock to men's minds; it must necessarily have set the most thoughtless to thinking; it must necessarily have made the most hardened supporter of Corruption begin to reflect on the possible ultimate consequences of all the measures of violence which had been adopted, and which were then in the course of being adopted. Therefore, even the *Stamp Office charge*, ridiculous as it was, and short-lived as *must* have been the impression produced by the fact of a man's *fleeing* from an income of *ten thousand guineas a year!* what could have produced such an effect, but the almost certainty of a *dungeon?* Unless, indeed, there had been some *crime* capable of being proved against me, which there was not, and

which there could not be, without the aid of *false witnesses*, and, though I have no doubt, that there were men willing to produce such, I should not have been at all afraid of them before a *common jury*. In short, it was seen, that, unless the Stamp-Office charge was resorted to, my flight would be imputed wholly and solely to a well-grounded conviction, that there *no longer remained any safety for innocence*, if accompanied with talent, a hatred of Boroughmongers, and public spirit sufficient to make that hatred known; and, therefore, that charge was resorted to as soon as it was found that I was fairly gone.

As to the charge, that I *owed rent* to Sir JAMES KEMPT, the rent due at my departure was for *one half year*, that is, 150 pounds! A pretty sum for *me* to run away for, who was receiving a profit of 200 pounds a week! Besides, there was twenty acres, or more, of most excellent *Swedish Turnips* on the farm, pulled up and laid in rows. There was a stack of Hay worth nearly 100 pounds. There was a threshing machine for which I had paid Mr. KEMPT himself about 60 pounds. There were fixtures in the House, for which I had paid him more than 100 pounds, I believe, besides a great deal which I had added. The turnips, in ordinary years, would have been worth 200 pounds. There were hot-bed frames in the garden worth 30 pounds. There were nursery plants in the gardens worth, perhaps, 30 or 40 pounds. The vile hirelings in London pretend that I had moved my residence from KEMPT's place to my own with a *design of being off*. And, for what purpose? Could not my goods be seized in one place as well as in the other, for any thing except his rent? and that was too foolish to be thought of. Besides, I removed in *October last*. The facts are these: When I left prison, in 1812, I



thought it prudent to quit *so large a house as my own was*, and to lessen all my expenses. I, therefore, took Mr. KEMPT's place, which had a neat little Gentleman's House on it, and the best gardens in the county, having nearly *three quarters of a mile of high Walls* for fruit trees. But, not having either sold, or let, my own place, which I had kept in very good order, and where my plantations and shrubberies had grown up to a fine height and become very beautiful, I resolved, in October last, (seeing I was then in no doubt as to my means) to return to my own nice and spacious House. This was done in a very slow manner. My servants were more than *a month*, first and last, removing the goods; and the library was still in the other House, until I went home, for three days, at the time of the Ports down Meeting, which was in *February*. So, I leave you to guess how *slyly* and *secretly* this was carried on. As to the story of my having *injured* SIR JAMES KEMPT's place. I had a lease of 14 years, and I am the *tenant still*, unless my attorney has chosen to give up the place. I had laid out more than 150 pounds in purchasing and planting the walls and garden with all the finest sorts of peaches, nectarines, apricots, plums, cherries, pears, and apples; and, as another proof of my *sly scheme to run away*, I had employed an excellent gardener (Dowse of Waltham Chase) *from November to March*, solely in pruning and nailing the trees and vines in these gardens of Mr. KEMPT; and I have no doubt but the fruit of this very year will be worth more than the rent of the whole farm. The vines against the walls, which bore nothing, scarcely, before I went to the place, I made, by my management, bear *half a ton* of grapes. There were three vines in a grape-house, which bore, the first summer I went there, owing to the bad

management before, only five or six bunches of grapes. I cut out two of them, leaving one, and, the last year, that one bore *more than 300 pounds of grapes*; which, with 20 shillings worth of fuel to hasten them on, could, if I had sold such things, have sold for 50 pounds sterling, though the stem of the vine was not so big as my wrist. I trusted nobody to prune this vine but myself. While I was at home in February last, I think, I pruned it; if I did, and if only common attention be paid to it during the summer, the weight of the grapes will exceed 500 lbs. and they are the finest and largest I ever saw. My excellent friend, Mr. BROWN, of Peckham Lodge, measured one single grape from this vine, which was *three inches and three quarters in circumference*. I mention these things to show what pains I had taken with these gardens, where I grew as great a weight of *melons* as was grown in any 20 gentlemen's gardens round the country; where I had very *large water melons*, which I never saw in England, except in my gardens. In short, I never sat myself down to any spot, in my whole life, without causing fruits, and flowers, and trees, (if there was time) and all the beauties of vegetation to rise up around me. The *leisure hours* which too many spend around the card table, or over the bottle, or in sauntering about, I and my family have spent in gardening, farming, and in the sports of the field, or, in reading books upon those subjects; and, I can solemnly declare, that I have never, even for one single evening, found any house so pleasant as my own, and that I have never known, at my own house, one single tedious hour. Cheerfulness and a capacity for great exertion you can have only with *health*, and that blessing is not to be enjoyed without *early rising, temperance, and exercise*, especially the two

former. I was two years in a prison for expressing *my indignation* at the flogging of English Local Militia Men, in the heart of England, under the guard of *German Troops*. During the whole time I never had even a head ache for a moment, though I wrote 5 large Octavo volumes in the 730 days, including that series of Letters, which have since become so celebrated under the title of "*Paper against Gold*," and which letters have given the deepest of all the stabs that corruption has received.

I am aware how far I have *digressed* here; but, as far as related to Mr. KEMPT's estate, minute as these facts are, they were necessary; and, as to my mode of life and the employment of my leisure hours, the facts may not be unuseful to those young men, who may desire to know the means, by which one man has been able to do so much in so short a space of time. To be *always in health* is the first thing; and, by health I do not mean merely the *absence of the doctor*; but the absence also of even a *muddled head*; and, to insure this blessing, if the constitution be sound, you have only (barring *accidents*) to rise early, eat moderately, and drink nothing that produces even *exhilaration*. There is a Latin maxim, which says, that "*Wine speaks truth*." This must have proceeded from some drunkard. That *truth* is not worth much which requires strong drink to bring it forth. A state of intoxication is a state of temporary *insanity*; and, really, for my part, I should prefer the company of a harmless madman to an habitual drunkard, and could almost as soon confide in him for any purpose whatever.

May 16th, 1817.

Having now shown how false and base these two charges against me were, I shall proceed to give you some account of my voyage. I and my two SONS, WILLIAM

and JOHN, set off from London, early in the morning of Saturday, the 22nd of March. We reached LITCHFIELD that night, and LIVERPOOL the next night about ten o'clock. Of the whole country through which we passed, (and all of which was very fine) we were most delighted with ten miles between DUNCHURCH and COVENTRY, in Warwickshire. The road very wide and smooth; rows of fine trees on the sides of it; beautiful white-thorn hedges and rows of ash and elm dividing the fields; the fields so neat; the soil so rich; the herds and flocks of fine fat cattle and sheep on every side; the beautiful homesteads and numerous stacks of wheat! Every object seemed to say: here are resources! here is wealth! here are all the means of national power and of individual plenty and happiness! and, yet, at the end of these ten beautiful miles, covered with all the means of affording luxury in diet and in dress, we entered that City of Coventry, which, out of *twenty thousand inhabitants*, contained, at that very moment, upwards of *eight thousand miserable paupers*; a fact which we well knew, not only from the Petition just presented to the Parliament, but also from a detailed *official* account in manuscript, which I had in my possession amongst my papers in London; and one of the Members for which public-spirited, though now miserable City, BUTTERWORTH, had *voted for all the recent measures of the government*, and had been one of the most active, though the most *silent* enemies to the Cause of Reform!

As we proceeded on through Staffordshire and Cheshire, all the same signs of wealth and of the sources of power, on the surface of the earth, struck us by day, and, by night, those more sublime signs, which issued from the furnaces on the hills. The cause-ways for foot-passen-



gers, *paved*, in some instances, for tens of miles together, as well, and more neatly, than the streets of London are paved; the beautiful rows of trees, shading those cause-ways; the canals winding about through the valleys, conveying coal, lime, stone, merchandize of all sorts; the immense and lofty woods on the hills; and the fat cattle and sheep every where: every object seemed to pronounce an eulogium on the industry, skill, and perseverance of the people. And, *why* then are those people in a state of such *misery and degradation*? We knew the cause before, and so did you. The fat cattle and corn do not remain in sufficient quantity amongst those who, by their various toil, produce them. The farmer, instead of giving to his labourer a sufficient share of what is produced, is compelled to give it to the *tax-gatherer*; the *tax-gatherer* hands it over to the government; the government hands it over to the Fundholder, the Sinecurist, the Pensioner, the Military Department, the Placemen, &c. It is the same with the Master-manufacturer and the Master-tradesman, who, instead of giving their work-people a sufficient quantity of money to enable them to share in the fat cattle and sheep, are compelled to give that share to the *tax-gatherer*. Hence it is that the far greater part of these things go away from the spot and the neighbourhood where they are raised, to be *eaten by those who receive the taxes, and by those who attend upon them*. The taxes are carried away in the pockets of the taxing people; and, the waggons and barges, corn, the butter, the cheese, and their own legs carry the cattle, pigs, and sheep, *after the taxes*. Accordingly, we met, every few miles, droves of fat oxen, pigs, and sheep, marching up towards the grand resort of the Fundholders, and Boroughmongers, and others who live upon the taxes.

I do not inculcate here, and, as you know well, I never have inculcated, the notion, that there ought to be *no taxes*. There must be government; and government cannot exist without money. But, what we complain of, is, that so much is taken from the mass of the people that they have not enough left to support life with any degree of comfort; that those

in the middle ranks are daily becoming poor; and, that the Journeymen and Labourers are starving, or existing in a state closely bordering upon starvation. We contend, that this is a state in which our forefathers did not live; we contend that this miserable state has been produced by our having been deprived of the right of choosing our representatives in Parliament; we have shown that this right belongs to us; we have legally, peaceably, and most humbly, prayed to have this right restored to us; and, the *answer* we have received are the measures which I need not describe to you, who *feel* the effects of those measures.

On the Sunday evening we entered the noble county of LANCASTER, which has shown so much talent, and public-spirit, just sentiment, and resolution, and perseverance, in these dreadfully trying times. We were sorry that night overtook us before we arrived at WARRINGTON; for, above all things, we had a desire to see as much as we could of the people of this famous county, where every hamlet is a village, every village a town, and every town a city. At LIVERPOOL, however, we had a *specimen* of the men of the county; and, I say, with pleasure and gratitude, that I never met with so many men in any year of my life, for whom I felt friendship and admiration, as I met with in Liverpool, in the space of three days, though my time was very much occupied with my own affairs, and though I sought no occasion to appear in public.

On Wednesday evening the 27th of March, we embarked on board the Ship IMPORTER, D. S. OGDEN, master, bound to New-York, where we arrived on the 5th of May, with about 40 steerage passengers, farmers and tradesmen, who were fleeing from ruin and starvation. In all respects that can be named, our passage was disagreeable; and, upon one occasion, very perilous from lightning, which struck the ship twice, and shivered two of the masts, killed a man, struck several people slightly, between two of whom I was sitting without at all feeling the blow. Some of our fellow passengers have found great disappointment; and it is stated in the public papers here, that many hundreds have, during the last year,

accepted of the offer of our Consul at New York to go and settle in Canada. You know that I have never advised any body to emigrate. I have always said that it is no place for manufacturers; no place for men to live without work; no place for a farmer who does not work himself; no place, in short, for any one who is not able and willing to work at the ordinary sorts of work, but, for such men, there is every where a plentiful, happy, and easy life. None should come, however, who have any views of idleness; and even for the industrious poor, I see no reason why they should spend their last shilling, and undergo all the miseries and dangers of a sea voyage, in order to save those who eat the taxes the expense of their share of poor-rates. A man and his wife, and a child or two, cannot come under an expense of 35 guineas, at least. A single man about 20 guineas, before he gets into work; and, as I always said, I never would, if I were in the place of such a man, expend my earnings on a sea voyage, and endure all its hardships, in order to remove one eye sore out of the eye of corruption. Besides, there is the climate, which is not so good as ours, though it is not bad, and though people often live to an old age. The country is good, but it will easily be conceived, that new faces, an entire new scene, a separation from every friend, work done in quite a different way from what it is in England; it will easily be conceived that all this makes such a dislocation in a man's mind as to make him very unhappy for a while. Then, he cannot expect to find work the first day. He must ask first at any rate. Englishmen are sheepish; and, if they meet with any little rebut, they are disgusted, at once, with the whole country; and, they are sure to find rascals enough here to foster their disgust, merely for the sake of serving the cause of Corruption at home. In short, I advise nobody to emigrate, but I will truly describe the country and the people. As to emigration with a view of settling and farming in new countries, it is neither more nor less than downright madness. It is what our English farmers know nothing at all about; it is what they are not at all fit for; and

the far greater part of all such speculations end in disappointment, if not in ruin and premature death. I hope that our beloved country will soon be fit for an honest and industrious man to live in; but, if any farmers come with money in their pockets, my advice is, not to give way either to enthusiastic admiration, or instant disgust. But to stop a little; to look about them; to see not only after good land, but a good market for its products. The Western Romance writers tell us that the land in the Ohio is too good; but Mr MELISH, in his valuable book, tells us that beef and pork sell for three half pence a pound. An excellent country for people who want to do nothing but eat. Give me Long Island, where the land is not too good; but, where beef and pork sell for about eight pence a pound. (I speak of English money) where good hay sells for five pounds a ton; and, where there is a ready sale for every species of produce. One thing above all: if an English farmer (I mean, by English, people of the whole United Kingdom comes here, with money in his pocket, let him resolve to keep it there for a year; and then he will be sure to do well.

All I see around me here is well calculated to attract the attention and to please the sight of one like myself, brought up in the country, always greatly delighted with, and somewhat skilled in, its various and pleasing and heathful pursuits. The people are engaged busily in planting their Indian Corn. The cherry trees, of which there are multitudes, planted in long avenues, or in rows, or round the fields, have dropped their blossoms, and begin to show their loads of fruit. The apple and pear orchards, in extent form one to twenty acres in each farm, are in full and beautiful bloom. The farms are small in extent; no appearance of great riches amongst the farmers, and not the smallest appearance of want amongst the labourers, who receive, in the country, about two shillings and three pence (our money) a day, with board and lodging, and which board consists of plenty of excellent meat and fish of all sorts, the best of bread, butter, cheese and eggs. That you may form some idea as to prices of



living, I will state a few facts, which have already come within my own knowledge. We are, at present, at an Inn, 13 miles from New-York. It is on the main road to that City. Scarcely an hour in the day passes, without a carriage of some sort offering for going thither, and to go by the regular stage costs *three shillings*. Mind, I shall always speak in English money, when I do not speak of *dollars*. We lodge and board in this Inn, have each a bed room and good bed, have a room to sit in to ourselves, we eat by ourselves, and, it really is *eating*. We have smoked fish, chops, butter, and eggs, for breakfast, with bread, (the very finest I ever saw,) crackers, sweet cakes; and, when I say, that we *have* such and such things, I do not mean that we have them for *show*, or just enough to smell to, but in *loads*. Not an egg, but a dish full of eggs. Not a snip of meat or of fish, but a plate full. Lump sugar for our tea and coffee; not broke into little bits the size of a hazle nut, but in good thumping pieces. For dinner we have the finest of fish, bass, mackerel, lobsters; of meat, lamb, veal, ham, &c. Asparagus, in plenty; apple pies, (though in the middle of May.) The supper is like the breakfast, with preserved peaches, cranberries, and other things. And, for all this, and excellent cider to drink, with the kindest and most obliging of treatment, on the part of the Landlord and Landlady, and their family, we pay no more than *twenty-two shillings and six pence a week each*. In England, the same food, and drink, and lodging, at an Inn, would cost us nearly the same sum *every day*. But, there are two things which *no money* can purchase any where. The first is, no grumbling on the part of the Landlady, except on account of our eating and drinking *too little*; and the other is, that Mr. WIGGINS has no fastening but *a bit of chip run in over the latch of his door* to a house which is full of valuable things of all sorts, and about which we leave all our things much more carelessly than we should do in our own house in any part of England. How then are we able to live at an Inn, one of the most respectable in the whole country, at the rate of 59 pounds a-year, while the pay of the common farming man is not much short of that sum.

All this is the effect of good government, of just and mild government, which takes so little from the people in taxes, that they have the means of happiness fully left in their hands. In short, the life which the people lead here, appears to be very much like the life their and our old forefathers led in former times, as described in the book of the honest old Chancellor Fortescue, in the passage which I inserted in my Register, in my letter to the Men of Norwich, dated on the 16th of January last; and which passage I will again insert here, for it is worthy of being written in letters of gold. The object of the Chancellor, who was writing a series of letters to the Prince, whom he expected to become King of England, was to convince him that a people must be happy or miserable in proportion as they were in possession, or deprived of, security for their persons and their property. After describing the insecurity of the people of France, in those days, from the arbitrary laws under which they lived; after describing the miserable life that they led, their beggarly dress and their meagre cat-lap food, he turns, on the other hand, to describe the effects of what he calls that *political mixed government*, which prevailed in England; and after speaking of the security which men in England had for their persons, he proceeds thus to speak of the security which they had for their property, and of the plentiful and happy manner of their lives: "The King cannot despoil the subject without making ample satisfaction for the same; he cannot, by himself or his ministry, lay taxes, subsidies, or any imposition whatever, upon the subject; he cannot alter the laws, or make new ones, without the express consent of the whole kingdom in Parliament assembled; every inhabitant is at his liberty fully to use and enjoy whatever his farm produceth, the fruits of the earth, the increase of his flock, and the like; all the improvements he makes, whether by his own proper industry, or of those he retains in his service, are his own to use and enjoy, without the least interruption, or denial of any. If he be in any wise injured, he shall have his amends and satisfaction against the party offending.

"HENCE it is that the inhabitants of England are rich in gold and silver, and all the necessities and conveniences of life. They *drink no water*, unless at certain times, upon a religious score, and by way of doing penance. They are fed in great *abundance*, with all sorts of *flesh and fish*, of which they have *plenty everywhere*; they are clothed, throughout, in *good woollens*; their bedding and other furniture in their houses are of wool, and that in *great store*; they are also *well provided* with all sorts of *household goods, and necessary implements for husbandry*; every one according to his rank, hath *all things* which conduce to *make life easy and happy*." And after this he observes, that these are the effects of laws, which are founded upon the principle, that "*a king is given for the sake of the kingdom, and not a kingdom for the sake of a king*."\*

Such was the life which the common fore-fathers of ourselves and the Americans led. You know but too well how different the life is which *you lead now*; and, it is hardly necessary to ask you the reasons why those our brethren, who are descended from the same forefathers, lead the happy life which I have described, while we (for I never shall separate myself from you) lead a life of such wretchedness and degradation. The truth is, that the immediate ancestors of the inhabitants of this country brought over the *laws of England* written upon their hearts, and, in spite of all attempts to efface them, whether by open violence or by sneaking fraud, they have had the wisdom and the courage to preserve them in their purity, only making such alterations, as to the application of their excellent principles, as the state of the country and other peculiar circumstances required. This is the cause, and the *only cause*, of this people being happy, while we are miserable; this is the only cause why the Americans lead the happy life that their forefathers led, and that we lead the miserable life that the forefathers of the French people led under the sway of the ancestors of the present Bourbons.

\* See FORTESCUE's Eulogium on the laws of England, Chapter XXXVI.

It is not, therefore, you see, the mere *form* of a government, the mere *name* by which a government is called, that makes the difference to the people. Whether the chief magistrate be a President or whether he be a King is of small importance. That which deeply affects the people, and which leads to produce their happiness or their misery, is the code of laws under which they live, and particularly that part of the laws which renders secure, or in-secure, the property and persons of the people. Happy as the people of even this Island are; plentiful and easy as is the life which they lead; their life does not exceed in happiness and ease the life which our forefathers led four hundred years ago, or the life which we ourselves might now lead under a kingly government in England. At the time when old Fortescue wrote, England was not in its happiest state in those days. There had been a sanguinary contest for the Crown between the Houses of York and of Lancaster; and the Chancellor *was himself in exile* when he wrote his celebrated book, which book has been a book of authority amongst lawyers, wherever the English laws have been in existence from that day to this. Let no one say, then; let no one make you believe, that your forefathers were prowling savages or filthy beggars; and it is a calumny upon us and our cause, to pretend that our object ever has been to alter the *form* of our government. A thousand times over, have I said, that we wanted *nothing new*. I say so still. We want the laws of England. We want no innovation. We want to destroy neither Kings, Nobles, nor Church. We want the laws of England, and *the laws of England we will have*. We can trace back to no time when England was without a King; without Nobles, and without an established Church. We *wish* to destroy none of them now; and, if their destruction *come* in consequence of the struggle which we are compelled to make for the recovery of our just and undeniable rights, be the fault upon the heads of those who persevere in refusing us those rights; who answer our arguments and our respectful and humble petitions "by shaking the halter in our faces and rattling in our ears the keys of the dungeon."



Permit me to request you to bear in mind, that it is the constitution of *England* that we contend for. There is a new sort of phraseology in use, against which you ought always to be upon your guard. The laws of *Scotland* were very different indeed from those of *England*, before the union of the two countries. They are so still to a certain extent, and when these gentry talk about the *British* constitution, be you assured that they have a *reason* for preferring that word to the word *English*. Since the union with *Ireland*, these persons talk about the constitution of the *United Kingdom*. Their meaning is, that we are to take and mix up with our laws, all the bad that existed in the laws of those two kingdoms, and that did not exist in the *English* laws, instead of our admitting the people of those two kingdoms, as ought to have been the case, to a participation in all the benefits of the *English* law. You never hear any of our opponents make use of the words *English Constitution*. They seem to have forgotten that there was any such a thing. But it is our business not to forget it; as we need not, seeing that we have all the charters, declarations of right, and ancient law-books to refer to. To the *English* constitution, therefore, we will stick; and that, I trust, we shall have at no distant day. I have been intimately acquainted with every distinguished Reformer in *England*; and I never in my life heard one of them express a desire to see any alteration made in the form of the government. Our opinion has invariably been, that it was not a question so much which was in theory the best form of government, as which form of government was most likely, with the least risk, to secure the property and persons of the people, to preserve the independence, and to uphold the character and power of the country. Nor do I believe that there was a single man in his sober senses in *England*; I do not believe that there was one man out of the million and a half or two millions who petitioned for Reform, who was actuated by any other motive than that of obtaining a real and fair representation of the people in Parliament. So that all that our enemies have asserted about *ulterior designs*, is as false as the hearts in

which the assertion originated. We defy them to the *proof*, without which, assertion is worth nothing. I have corresponded, in the most confidential manner, with thousands of men in *England* upon public matters. I have conversed confidentially with thousands. I hereby give leave to every one, to whom I ever wrote, to lay before the Ministers, or to publish to the world, any letter of mine, however private its subject. I hereby give leave to every one, to whom I ever spoke, to repeat what he has ever heard me say; and, if credible testimony can be produced, that I ever entertained a design to overturn the government in its present form, I am willing to acknowledge myself a traitor, and to pass for such to the end of my life. But, RESISTANCE OF OPPRESSION is another matter. The doctrine upon that subject I hold agreeably to the laws of *England*; agreeably to the decision of her courts of justice; agreeably to the impeachments on the part of the House of Commons; agreeably to the decisions of the House of Lords, in its solemn judicial capacity; and, as to this important matter, that doctrine, so grounded, shall be my *constant guide*, which guide I will follow, to the utmost of my power, in whatever way circumstances may enable me to act myself, or to engage or induce others to act.

*Resistance of oppression* is a right inherent in every people; it is a right acknowledged by the laws of *England*; it is a right upon which the people of *England* have acted in many instances, especially in the reign of King JOHN, that of RICHARD THE SECOND, and that of JAMES THE SECOND; it is a right, for the publicly *denying* of which, in a sermon, a Doctor of the Church of *England* was impeached by the House of Commons, tried, found guilty, and punished by the House of Lords; it is a right for the *calling of which in question* many persons were punished as *seditious libellers*, during the reigns of WILLIAM THE THIRD, of QUEEN ANN, and of GEORGE THE FIRST. In the reign of CHARLES THE SECOND the gallant and learned SIDNEY, was tried, condemned, and executed, for having maintained, in writings, found in his bureau, this *right to resist oppression*. But, the judge, (the

bloody Jefferies) who tried him, was, in the next reign, knocked in the head by the populace, having disguised himself in a sailor's dress; the Royal Family, who sanctioned, and who prompted the base murder, were driven from the throne for ever; and the Parliament afterwards passed a law, declaring the judgment against SIDNEY to be *contrary to the law of the land*, declaring it to be *unjust*, declaring the judge to have been *corrupt*, and the jury *perjured*, and annulling the whole of the proceedings.

Thus, then, it cannot be denied, that, agreeably to the laws of England, the right of *resisting oppression* does exist. Indeed, such a right must exist in every people, or that people must be completely enslaved. They must acknowledge the right of a despot, or despots, to treat them like cattle; or, they must contend that they have a right to *resist* at some *point* or other. The Bourbon Royalists say, it is the duty of a Frenchman to cry:—“*Vive le Roi, quand même!*” You see these words sometimes in the TIMES newspaper, the proprietor of which has a *monthly stipend* from the Bourbons. The meaning of them is this: “*God save the king, though even;*” that is to say, “*God save the king, though even he should order me to be skinned alive.*” But, baseness so brutal as this is not acknowledged by any other men, that I have ever heard of, though the sons and daughters of corruption in England would fain inculcate the doctrine.

Seeing, therefore, that men must necessarily be slaves, brute slaves, or possess the right to *resist oppression*, the next thing to be considered is, in *what cases* that right ought to be acted upon. It is very certain, that every individual man ought not, upon his own bare opinion to set himself up in resistance of the persons in authority; but, it is equally certain, that there is a *point*, beyond which the endurance of a people ought not to go. Suppose, for instance, the Congress of these United States was to pass what they might call a *law* for taking one half of every man's property from him, and for giving that property to their own families, mistresses, bastards and supporters; suppose that they were to pass another thing that they might call a law,

for punishing, with worse than instant death, every man who should complain of these measures; suppose they were then to pass another thing that they might call a law for taking away the people's voice at elections, and for enabling the Congress to elect and re-elect themselves. If such measures were to be adopted by the Congress, would it not be time to think about putting the right of resistance *in force* throughout these states? I guess it would; and so, I am sure, the people of these States would guess, long before things arrived at this pitch.

Then, as to the *sort* and *mode* of resistance, the people would, doubtless, be guided by circumstances, and would employ *every species* of means, which fell within their power, open or secret, just as an individual is justified, in the eye of the law as well as in that of honour, in using any sort of deception or weapon against another, who unlawfully attempts to deprive him by force of his money or his life; and, it was upon this principle, that a gentleman in Ireland was *knighted* by the Prince Regent, in 1811 or 1812, for having stabbed several house-breakers with a carving knife. It is very well known, that GEORGES went from England to France for the express purpose of killing Bonaparte, which he actually attempted to do; it is well known that he was executed for that attempt; and, it is well known, that the Bourbons have *enobled* his family on account of the loyal attempt of GEORGES. Bonaparte was represented as an *Usurper* and an *Oppressor*. This representation was not true; but, that is of no consequence to our argument, which is built upon the ground of *the existence of oppression*, which, we contend, justifies the use of *any means* in the resistance of it; and, for this reason, that oppression necessarily implies the use of *any means* which the oppressors may stand in need of for the effecting of their purposes. If, for instance, the Congress, in the case above supposed, were to murder scores of men in the same way that SIDNEY was murdered in the reign of Charles the Second, would not the people of these States have a right to kill the tyrants by any means within their power? In what *other way* could they resist the



oppressors? The people of England invited over a *Dutch army*, and employed it against James the Second. They were ready to besiege towns, and to burn them down if necessary, in order to make their resistance of the tyrant successful. And, in short, it is clear, that, when the point is once settled, *that oppression does really exist* there are no means within the reach of the people that they have not, both legally and morally, a right to employ against the oppressors, as far as is necessary to put an end to the oppression, and as far as is necessary to the ends of justice unmixed with vindictiveness.

Such is the doctrine relative to the *right of resisting oppression*; which doctrine I repeat, is recognised by the laws and usages of England; has been acted upon in various instances; and stands sanctioned and recorded in the proceedings of the Courts of Justice and in those of the two Houses of Parliament. Upon this doctrine I shall act, whenever I think the time for acting is arrived. But, I do not pretend, at present, to offer any opinion as to the *fact*, whether oppression does really exist or not. I would fain hope, that the measures, which have taken away the personal safety of every man in the kingdom; which have placed every man at the absolute mercy of any one of the Secretaries of State; which have made of no effect the most precious of all the fundamental laws of the land: I would fain hope, that these measures will be of short duration, and that reason and justice will resume their sway in my native country; and, if this hope should prove fallacious, I, for my part, will not be amongst the first to adopt, or recommend, acts of resistance, either open or secret. I and those of my sons, who are capable of action, will again respectfully and humbly petition the Prince Regent for a redress of those grievances which we feel in common with the rest of our countrymen, and for a restoration to those rights, which we have proved to be our due. If that Petition be rejected, it will then remain for us to consider what path our just rights and our duty to our King and Country call upon us to pursue.

WM. COBBETT.

N. B. Since writing the above, I have

got the *MORNING CHRONICLE* of the 31st of March. Mr PERRY, who was always famed for *foul-play*, could hardly be expected to do less than *back-bite* me, whom he dared never *face*. This mean, malignant, and mercenary man affects to believe that the Stamp Office charge against my son had *something of justice* in it; and, thereupon, in his old hacknied style, he blames the *Ministers* for neglecting to demand the money sooner! What baseness is this! He *knows*, that we owe not a farthing. He *knows* perfectly well that the whole story is a deception, and he knows the *motive* of the deception too. And yet he has the baseness to treat it as a reality! He imputes to me mercenary motives. Very *mercenary* to flee from the receipt of *ten thousand pounds a year*! Mr. Perry and I worked for the putting in of the Fox Ministry, in 1806. The first thing that I did, as soon as my friends were in power, was to apprize them of my resolution to have *no place or profit under the government*; and the first thing Mr. PERRY did was to *secure himself a place of 1200 guineas a year*! Let the people of England judge between us. A gentleman of fortune in England has authorized a friend of mine to write to me, that, if *money will facilitate my return, it shall not be wanting*. I beg this gentleman to accept of my best thanks. But, I am here in order to help to make England a place fit for us all to live in; and, as to *money*, I have left behind me *three times as much as will pay all I ever owed*. If the Borough-Mongers, or their agents, proceed to *confiscate*, under whatever pretence, my engagements to individuals must, of course, go unfulfilled. It is a calamity which I not avoid; but I will endeavor still to make good all those engagements in which I have no fear of success. But, as to *money*, all the money in the world shall never induce me to remain silent until the Borough-Mongers do the nation justice, and that, too, upon the principles of the *Hampshire Petition*. That was *he* only Petition that I ever signed in all my life; and by that Petition I mean to abide. —The Borough-Mongers are, I perceive, still increasing in *uneasiness* about the *press*. They must come to the open, undisguised *Censorship* at last, or they will

not hold out *another year*. The Censorship of the Magistrates and of the Stamp-Office, and the Libel Laws, together with the new Treason Law; these are very ingenious and searching; but, they will not do. There must be a downright undisguised Censorship of the Press, as there is of the Play-houses. There must be an office for examining *beforehand*, and for suppressing, or permitting, publications of all sorts. This is all that is now wanted to render the thing *quite perfect*. And, yet, even this would not keep up the system for *three years*. The act giving to the Ministers the *absolute power of imprisonment* expires on the first of July. It will be *renewed*, be you well assured, and under a promise to repeal it as soon as Parliament shall meet again; that is to say, "if the country be *tranquil*;" but, as that tranquillity will never come, until a Reform of the Parliament shall take place, so the Act will be in force as long as the Borough-mongering System shall remain. Indeed, the personal safety of the people is *now* wholly incompatible with the existence of that system. The system is now at *open war* with the personal safety of the people; and, one or the other must be put out of existence. There is nothing, therefore, so contemptible as the conduct of those, who have *affected* to oppose the Absolute-power-of-imprisonment Act, while they also oppose Parliamentary Reform. This is sheer hypocrisy; or, it is folly in the extreme. In some instances it is the latter; but, in most instances, it is decidedly the former. The people want *the right of choosing their representatives*; and, if this be refused them, they do not, if I know any thing of their disposition, care one straw, whether there be, or be not, any personal safety for any body.

In my total ignorance of what the Borough-mongers may be doing with regard to my property of any sort, or with

regard to my eldest son's property of books and copy-rights, I cannot say any thing positive as to what will, or can, be done by me relative to individuals with whom I, or my son, may have unsettled money affairs. But, this I can say, and, by this I will abide; that, as all the world knows, the Borough-mongers have taken a great fortune from me and my family, and, that I am no more answerable for the consequences, with regard to pecuniary engagements to individuals, than a man would be who should engage to run a race on a certain day, and whose legs should be cut off before the arrival of that day. Suppose, for instance, that the government of this country were to pass a law to put an instant stop to the use of steam-boats, at its pleasure; would any just man say that those proprietors were morally bound, if they had the good fortune to escape into some country of justice, to toil there all their lives, in order to make good any engagements that they might have contracted with individuals, during the time of their being proprietors of steam-boats? No just man will answer in the affirmative. Still, I will do my best to make up for the confiscations of the Borough-mongers; but, I hereby publicly give notice to every person with whom I may have any pecuniary engagements, that, if they proceed to any acts of legal malice; that if they give any obstruction to the performance of any thing that may be to my advantage, and that may tend to *alleviate*, in some small degree, the blow which the Borough-mongers have given me in a pecuniary way, that I will not only never pay them one single farthing, if I should have heaps of money, but, that, on the contrary, I shall consider them, as *aiders and abettors of the Borough-mongers*, and that, whenever the day of justice shall arrive, I will act towards them accordingly.

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